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THE UNITY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The phrase "the Middle Ages" has a power to charm with its suggestion of mystery, of romance and of chivalry; of primitive peoples and of the beginning of civilization and of the nations of modern history. It presents to us all the interest of the transition from the old world of the Greek and Roman civilization to the new world of Christian civilization in the great nationalities of Europe and America and the far East. We still hear the old refrain:—

"In days of old, when Knights were bold,
And Barons held their sway."

Modern historians object to the division of history into periods; but this is due to a misunderstanding of what 'period' means. No period, as such, is uniform throughout, nor can there be found any hard and fast division, separating one period from another. The floor of the long hall of history is not made of boards of equal length; thus some movements, beginning in one period, extend into a succeeding one; and within any single period there is a progress and development, or a rise and climax and decline, like the flow and the ebb of the tide. If we bear this in mind, the division of history into periods will be found helpful alike to the memory and to the understanding. It is like the line of the equator and the parallels of latitude on a globe, which are imaginary but not capricious, and mark out definite distinctions in climate, fauna, flora, etc.

The Middle Ages may be placed, most appropriately, between 476 A. D. and 1517 A. D. A great change, a real crisis in the West, took place in the last half of the fifth century; and another crisis, little short of a revolution, in the first half of the sixteenth century. Even Professor Shotwell, in the last edition of the *Britannica*, although disapproving of this theory held by the earlier historians regarding the year 476, as too definite and as not marking the final end of the unity of the Eastern and Western Empires, finds himself obliged by the logic of events to declare: "Yet we may say that the fifth century did witness the actual dismemberment of the Roman Empire." It did more than

that. It may be true that the importance of the year 476 has been greatly overestimated, and that even the significance which it does possess was not recognized at that time, but it practically coincides with so many events besides that of the accession of Odovaker to the throne of Italy and the sending of the imperial insignia to Constantinople, that its adoption seems historically justifiable. It marks the end of the close connection of the West with the East, the foundation of the Papacy by Leo I (440-461), the close of the period of the first four and most important constructive General Councils by that of Chalcedon, 451 A. D. Besides the beginning of the great Frankish power, destined to control European history for centuries, it marks the beginning also of the English nation by the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain, begun 449 A. D., though not completed until a century and a half later. Professor Shotwell says also that "for five or six centuries—from the fifth to the eleventh—comparatively little progress was made." This is only true enough to be misleading. These centuries saw the complete establishment of the papal power in its moral, ecclesiastical and political supremacy, which dominated the political, social, religious, and intellectual history of Europe until its international unity was shattered by the "Protestant Revolution", as Seeböhm rightly calls it, in the sixteenth century. Even Marsilius of Padua, in the fourteenth century, supported by the Emperor Louis IV and by the scholastic philosophy of Bacon and of Occam, was unable to break the spell of the Papacy. Nor could Wiclif and Huss, nor the Schism and the Reforming Councils accomplish it. But Luther did it when he nailed his ninety-five Theses to the chapel door at Wittenberg, 1517 A. D., and laid the true foundations of democracy and liberty of conscience by his doctrine of Justification by Faith; although Luther was not a democrat, and did not realize, either for himself or for others, true liberty of conscience.

The study of history is the study of the progress of humanity toward freedom and the development of the individual. As Hegel puts it: "The essential destiny of the spiritual world, the final cause of the world at large, is the consciousness of its own freedom on the part of Spirit. This result it is at which the process of the world's history has been constantly aiming, the

only aim that sees itself realized and fulfilled." "Freedom", he declares in another place, "is the sole truth of Spirit." Perhaps we might say, more definitely and concretely, that history is the record of the development of the individual. At least, this statement makes the strongest appeal to the modern mind. A philosophic and scientific study of history, then, is the effort to trace the course of that development through all the circumstances, institutions and events of human experience.

In this study three distinct phases may be noted: First, the predominance of institutions, when the solidarity of the human race, or of some portion of it, is most prominent. Generally speaking, this is the age of the great Empires, embracing many peoples, races and languages, under one supreme ruler. This period includes ancient history and the transition through the Greek and Roman Empires into the Mediæval Papacy, the last and greatest embodiment of the imperial idea. Second, the assertion of the supreme importance of the individual, beginning, in the sixteenth century, with a general theoretical recognition of individualism, and continuing until it has reached its extreme practical assertion in our own time, as is evidenced in literature, in society, in religion, and in many social, industrial, and political forms. Third, a new phase, already beginning, which marks the union of the two described above, leading up to or bringing about a reconciliation of these two, making possible the realization of the individual in a fuller and still more perfect way, through the great institutional forms without which, as we are now beginning to see, perfect individuality cannot be realized. This applies, primarily, of course, to the three great fundamental institutions, the Family, the State, and the Church, but also to all minor institutions, such as associations, unions, and even clubs. In fact, we are beginning to recognize that while institutions must exist and be maintained, they really exist not ultimately for themselves, but for the individual.

In this scheme, the special period which we are considering comes at the close of the first of the three phases and marks the transition from the great Empires of the ancient and classical world to the national and personal individualism of the Modern Age. The increased recognition of the importance and true

significance of this period is apparent even in the change of the name. It used to be called the "Dark Ages"; but that name has dropped entirely out of use, or is applied only to the tenth century, although even that century can hardly be called 'Dark' which saw the founding of the monastic order of Cluny, the final check upon the barbarian invasions of the Magyars in the East, and the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire. As a transition period, made up of new, confused, complex and variously combined elements more or less indefinite, fragmentary, preparatory and unformed, it presents peculiar difficulties for scientific study and analysis. It has, nevertheless, a marked character of its own. It is a period confessedly dominated by ecclesiastical conceptions. The form of these conceptions was not a pure, but a mixed and adulterated Christianity: part Evangelical teaching, part Roman imperialism, part Greek philosophy, and part Heathen notions.

From the time of Constantine the Christian Church became increasingly important until, during the Middle Ages, it was the dominating influence throughout Europe, not merely intellectually, religiously, morally and spiritually, but also socially, politically and economically. It is therefore the central and connecting bond of union for the whole period, not only as a powerful influence but as the predominant, and in a very real sense, the universal, international institution, centred in and upheld by the Papacy. Once this is seen, what otherwise appears as a confused mass of disconnected details, becomes a coördinated, orderly development, in which the different movements and events find their true place and are capable of intelligible arrangement.

What we may call the keynote of the Mediæval Papacy, and therefore of the period, is found in two documents, closely allied in purpose although separated by more than two centuries. The first is the great collection of the Forged Decretals, called the Pseudo-Isidore, belonging to the middle of the ninth century, including the forged Donation of Constantine, produced about three quarters of a century earlier. The other document is the *Dictatus Papæ*, belonging to the Hildebrandine age, at the close of the eleventh century, setting forth the policy of Pope Gregory VII, although probably not written by him.

Jesus and the New Testament taught universal brotherhood, the equality of all men in the sight of God, the universal priesthood of all Christians, and the all-comprehensiveness of the Kingdom of God. The Middle Ages took the idea and pattern of the Roman Empire, applied it to the Christian Church and developed the Papacy and the clerical hierarchy as an institution by and of itself, separate and distinct from the rest of the people—the laity. They completely reversed the principle of Jesus—"the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath"—when they declared that humanity exists for the Church, not the Church for humanity, and that the Church is the clergy.

The Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals are the *locus classicus* of this principle, worked out and elaborated on the basis of papal decretals forged to meet the issues of the time, but ascribed to the bishops of Rome, beginning with Clement, 100 A. D., although genuine decretals do not exist earlier than 387 A. D. It should be carefully noted that, although ninety-four out of two hundred and forty-nine—three-eighths in all—of the decretals are forgeries ascribed to a very early date, they reflect and meet the spirit and conditions of the time when they were compiled—the middle of the ninth century.

The changed conditions of the Frankish Church at the accession of Louis the Pious, son and successor of Charlemagne, 814 A. D., were largely due to: first, the filling of bishoprics and other high ecclesiastical offices with native clergy; secondly, the increase of ecclesiastical lands and property, and the formation of large ecclesiastical estates, which consequently were brought into, and made a part of, the rapidly forming feudal system; thirdly, the replacement of the power of the local council by the personal authority of the bishop of the chief city; fourthly, the control of the bishops by provincial synods over which was the Metropolitan or Archbishop, who had also a civil authority; fifthly, the merging of these synods in the political assemblies, in which the chief bishops and abbots sat as a part of the territorial nobility, so that they regulated both ecclesiastical and secular affairs.

During the time of Charlemagne, when this system first came into vogue, it had developed great strength for both Church and

State officials. But with the decline of the central power during and after the reign of Louis the Pious, there came divisions and strife, leading to the secular oppression of the Church. Then began to appear a phenomenon frequently repeated in the history of the Church, which may be likened to a bird whose flight seems to be retarded by the friction of the air, yet, when this friction is removed by exhausting the air, the bird, left alone in the vacuum, falls to the ground. So with the relation between Church and State; the State in its strength supports and maintains the Church, though sometimes seeming to restrain and oppress it, yet when, either through ecclesiastical opposition or for other causes, the State becomes weak, the Church in turn loses its main support and falls a prey to disintegrating forces, either external, as in the tenth, or internal, as in the fourteenth century.

In the ninth century, therefore, there seemed to be great need, first, to free the Church from this subjection to the State; secondly, to make her independent of the civil power; thirdly, to unify, solidify and strengthen her own organization; and fourthly, to give such organization a strong foundation in law and precedent. To accomplish this was the great problem of the ninth century. To meet this need and to solve this problem was the object of the Forged Decretals, which formed the constitution and the law of the Mediæval Church. The author, accordingly, lays down most firmly, as fundamental, the distinction between clergy and laity, amounting to a complete separation. New Testament expressions about Christians and non-Christians were taken as setting forth this distinction between clergy and laity. The clergy are the spiritual, the leaders of the blind, the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the anointed of the Lord, the royal priesthood, the inheritors and princes of the Kingdom of God. To resist them is to resist God; they are to judge and not to be judged by man; they are the masters, and "the servant is not above his master." The laity, including all earthly princes, kings and emperors, are carnal, blind, members of this world, servants. The hierarchy is the priesthood in the two orders of bishops and presbyters, corresponding to the Twelve and the Seventy appointed by Jesus, and constituting His Church. "The bishops are the keys of the Church. All the presbyters

ought to obey them in all things without delay; all the faithful must give heed to them, for those who obey their bishops seem indeed to confer a favor on God." "The rank of the apostles is one, although those are primates who hold the chief cities. But this sacred Roman Apostolic Church has obtained the primacy, not from the apostles, but from our Lord and Saviour Himself, as He said to the blessed apostle Peter, 'thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church' (St. Matt. XVI, 18). Therefore the first See, by the favor of heaven, is the Roman Church. As it is written, 'Moses and Aaron among His priests' (Ps. XCIX, 6)—that is, they were chief among them." Thus it is evident that the author's main object was to free the clergy from the secular power, and to establish the hierarchy, maintaining the coequal authority of all bishops, although they might differ in importance, placing the Roman See at the head, possessing all power and authority, derived, not, as in the case of the other bishops, from the apostles, but from Christ Himself, through St. Peter, whom he had appointed and whom the other apostles acknowledged as their chief.

The *Dictatus Papæ*, found among the papers of Gregory VII, and drawn up probably by one of his cardinals as the summary of the papal power and principles, is the Hildebrandine version of these declarations, emphasizing those points which subserve chiefly the aims and interests of the Papacy as derived from, and based upon, the Forged Decretals, then universally accepted; ideas and principles which governed and directed the Papacy during its whole future, and still tacitly maintained, though no longer realized and carried into effect. The *Dictatus* contains twenty-seven statements or declarations, among which are the following: (1) That the Roman Church was founded by God alone; (2) That the Roman Bishop alone is properly called universal; (3) That he alone has the power to depose bishops and reinstate them; (12) That he has the power to depose emperors; (17) That no action of a synod, and no book, may be considered canonical without his authority; (18) That his decree can be annulled by no one and that he alone may annul the decrees of anyone; (19) That he can be judged by no man; (20) That no one shall dare to condemn a person who appeals to the Apostolic See; (22) That

the Roman Church has never erred, nor ever, by the testimony of Scripture, shall err, to all eternity; (27) That he [the pope] has the power to absolve the subjects of unjust rulers from their oath of fidelity.

These authoritative statements of the fundamental principles of the Mediæval Papacy explain, positively or negatively, all the great movements of the Middle Ages, with its one supreme struggle, not only of the Papacy against the Empire, nor merely of the Church against the State, but of the entire ecclesiastical order against the growing secular order in all its forms and phases as it developed into the new life of the Modern Age. This was recognized by some of the greatest minds of the period, Henry II of England, Philip IV of France, the emperors Henry III, Frederick I, Frederick II and others, and most clearly by Marsilius of Padua; but the world was not ripe for the change. The Church still had its place to fill in the economy of history. As Dr. Allen has clearly pointed out, in his *Continuity of Christian Thought* (one of the ablest presentations of the philosophy of Church history which has yet appeared), "It had been constructed in obedience to one test,—its fitness or utility for holding mankind in subjection to an external authority. When that authority was no longer needed, or could be no longer maintained . . . the time must come when it would appear as untrue to the divine revelation, as a hindrance to the growth of the human spirit. The period known as the Middle Ages reached its culmination in the thirteenth century. Up to that time there was lurking in every movement the spirit of Hildebrand; after it, everything pointed to a Luther. For two centuries before the Reformation, the Latin Church was slowly losing its hold upon the reason and the conscience of Christendom. When Luther appeared, he only declared the result which had been already accomplished."

It would take too long, for it would be necessary to follow the whole course of the development of Mediæval Europe, to show how this principle of the supreme influence and significance of the Church affected, directly or indirectly, every detail of the otherwise confused and intricate history. A passing reference to the principal individuals, movements and institutions, how-

ever, will clearly indicate and verify this fact. We must begin with a brief outline of the Papacy itself, in order to show what it really was, and that it did remain, through all the centuries, the powerful centre and controlling influence of the life and activity of the West. Europe in the Middle Ages was essentially Christian, not, perhaps, morally and spiritually, but formally, externally and ecclesiastically, while the Papacy was as much an essential element of the Christian Creed as was the doctrine of the Incarnation. There might be, in certain quarters and at certain times, some variety of interpretation, but the fact was just as fixed and fundamental an element of the Christian faith in one case as in the other, and this history will show.

Professor Lodge, in his Introduction to E. Lodge's *End of the Middle Ages*, truly says: "The essential thing to grasp is that the period was one of transition—a time in which mediæval characteristics were decaying and modern characteristics were growing up; but in which the former had not disappeared, and the latter were not yet strong enough to take their places." But he is neither exact nor discriminating when he goes on to say: "Popes and Emperors still claimed to be the joint heads of Western Christendom, and sometimes acted as if their supremacy was still recognized, but their claims were practically obsolete." This is strikingly true in regard to the so-called emperors; but it is anticipating history to apply it to the Papacy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, for it was not realized in fact until the sixteenth century. It is true that the Papacy had to pass through the trying experiences of the residence in Avignon, and the Forty Years' Schism, when two complete Papacies, one at Rome and one at Avignon, struggled for the mastery, divided the allegiance of the nations of Europe, and threatened to destroy the very *raison d'être* of the Papacy as the centre and bond of ecclesiastical unity. It had to meet also the Reforming Councils, with their eager efforts for reform and their still more threatening declaration of the supremacy of general councils over the Papacy itself, carrying with them, in the method of voting by nations, at Constance and at Basle, the emphatic assertion of the increased significance of the developing national consciousness and the growing importance of national Churches. Neverthe-

less, it emerged triumphantly in Martin V, Eugene IV, Nicholas V, and Pius II, and, even after the most scandalous pontificates of Innocent VIII, Alexander VI, and the hardly less unworthy Julius II, it appeared in the person of Leo X, on the very eve of the Reformation, seemingly with no less power, and with even greater splendor, than it had ever before manifested. It was far from appearing "obsolete", and although rotten at the core and ready to fall, its outward signs were like the flush of seeming health which only to the eye of the experienced physician betrays the devastating disease lurking within.

The residence at Avignon, while subjecting the Papacy to French control, at the same time gave it assured support in the increasing arrogance with which the claims of a universal papal monarchy were promulgated. The popes seemed, indeed, to recompense themselves for this humiliation at the hands of France by an extension of their power abroad, setting up the papal claim of universal monarchy in opposition to the imperial claim founded on the principles of the Roman Jurists. Indeed, in the year 1314, Clement V could publish anew, in formal bulls, the doctrine of papal sovereignty as superior to the imperial power, without encountering any immediate resistance. This brought on the last decisive contest with the imperial power, in the reign of Louis IV. The Jurists were the natural allies of the emperor, and not even all the Canonists were able to keep pace with the bold encroachments of the papal claims; yet the issue of the contest amply fulfilled the highest papal expectations and taught the secular rulers, once more, that the time was not yet come for a successful struggle with the Papal See. Charles IV humbly recognized the rights lately usurped over the Empire. Thus, while the idea of the Papacy which had grown up in Hildebrand, Innocent III and Boniface VIII, was indeed incapable of further expansion, it was developed, without reserve, into all its most obnoxious results, particularly by the Mendicant Friars, and by the financial policy of Church exploitation which the popes were able to effect. The dissenting voices raised on the side of Louis IV made no general impression on the age and died into silence when, after the emperor's death, the papal victory was complete and de-

cisive. Furthermore, the kings of France gladly allowed this extension of the papal power, now that it was always at their service. Unfortunately, financial needs, incident to absence from Rome and the consequent loss and diminution of much of their Italian revenue, together with the increased expense and luxury of the papal court at Avignon, led to all kinds of ecclesiastical oppressions, chiefly financial. These had been practised in earlier times by secular princes, and had called forth, indeed, the strongest invectives and resistance on the part of the popes, but were now even more extensively put into operation by the popes themselves. The Schism, which followed the return to Rome of a part of the papal court, still further lessened the revenues of the popes and increased their expenses, causing, therefore, renewed aggravations of these, already intolerable ecclesiastical oppressions, which, owing to the strength of the Papacy, could not be successfully resisted. Roman and French popes, alike, rivalled each other in extortions and in simony, publicly practised and defended without any sense of shame. All this naturally aroused and strengthened religious scruples against the Schism, particularly in the University of Paris, while here and there arose a few individuals—very few and seemingly uninfluential—who went so far as to wish the Papacy entirely removed from the Church as the source of all her evils.

Even some of its truest adherents, however, notably John of Gerson, acknowledged the monstrous exaggeration of the papal dignity, especially in its accession to secular power, which they regarded as the prime cause of all mischief, and of the Schism itself. Desires were openly expressed to bring about some limitations at least of the papal power. Hence, during the Schism, circumstances led to the demand for a general council, and the universal acknowledgment that such a council must rank above the pope. The Council of Pisa, accordingly, was held in 1409, but it was dissolved within five months, leaving three popes instead of two.

The Council of Constance, 1414-1418, cleared the field and allowed the election of Martin V in 1417, and then permitted itself to be dissolved without fulfilling the hopes of its promoters.

The new pope, without opposition, at once restored the papal monarchy to a position above all the limits which the ecclesiastical aristocracy meant to have imposed upon it. He even ventured, in spite of the express principle of the council, to pronounce inadmissible all appeals from the pope to a general council. Without regard to the pope, therefore, a new council was opened at Basle in 1431, which renewed the decrees made at Constance, asserting the superiority of general councils, and began, in every respect, to maintain the supremacy of its authority in the Church, going so far as to lay down certain principles which threatened the very foundations of the Papal See. In 1433, most of the papal reservations were abolished and regular diocesan and provincial synods were prescribed. After four years, however, the pope, Eugene IV, removed the council from Basle to Ferrara, where his influence could be more powerfully exercised. But the council refused to be removed and passed sentence of suspension upon the pope, and, thenceforth, dropping all matters of reform, applied its energies to the controversy with the pope, which continued until 1443. The princes, however, were left to secure, by individual arrangement, such of the reforming decrees of the council as they could appropriate, while endeavoring to avert the impending Schism. Charles VII gained for France the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, in 1438, the basis of the famous Gallican liberties. The emperor Albert II secured them for Germany by the Deed of Acceptance of Mayence in 1439. But the council proceeded to create a new Schism by the deposition of Eugene IV, in 1439, and the election of a new pope, Felix V. Europe had had its fill of Schism, however, and the movement fell flat. After dragging on a few years longer, the council held its last session in May, 1443, and thenceforth existed only in name.

The Papacy now endeavored, and was able, with Roman craft and persistence, to win back what had been lost at the Council of Basle. New concessions were gained in Germany and the acceptance of Mayence was renounced; but it was not until 1515 that Francis I annulled the Pragmatic Sanction in France, and signed a concordat dividing the privileges of the Gallican Church between the pope and the king. The degeneracy, profligacy, and im-

morality of the Papacy between 1471 and 1503 need not be described; yet the Papacy still maintained its power and influence. The warlike Julius II, by his own military prowess and shrewdness, aided by the League of Cambray with Francis and the emperor in 1508, established his triumph in the Fifth Lateran Ecumenical Council of 1512, then drove the French from Italy and, as we have seen, enabled his successor, Leo X, to extort from Francis I the annulment of the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges. Once more the nations of Europe lay prostrate at the feet of the pope. Now, at last, the Papacy seemed to have quelled entirely the hostile spirit which had grown up at Constance and at Basle, and which had found its stronghold in France; but at this very time it was on the verge of its most grievous fall. Luther, Henry VIII and Calvin, each in his own place, effected what no former kings, emperors, philosophers, and reformers, nor even the whole Church, separately or combined, had been able to accomplish.

Dr. Allen, in his *Continuity of Christian Thought*, to which reference already has been made, gives a most illuminating summary and explanation of the subject: "The papacy", he says, "rose at a time when men were unable or no longer free to think for themselves, when they had ceased to be competent to the task of self-government. Its career drew to a close when men were once more able to resume the office, which in their weakness they had delegated to a priesthood, when they were once more free to think for themselves. The work of the popes was done, and He who had raised an institution so unwelcome in its first appearance, but so necessary, was now removing it, or gently letting it down from its old supremacy. The Papacy had served the purpose of consolidating the different races of Europe into one great family, so that they could never again lose the sense of relationship; it had held men under subjection to an external law until they were able to hear a voice that spoke within; it had served as the conscience of the people at a time when otherwise they would have been mute under the oppression or brute force of the civil power." In the same strain, Ranke says, in his *History of the Popes*: "There is a spirit of community in the modern world which has always been regarded as the basis of its

progressive improvement, whether in religion, politics, manners, social life or literature. To bring about this community, it was necessary that the Western nations should at one period constitute what may be called a single politico-ecclesiastical state. But this also was to be no more than the phenomenon of a moment in the grand march of events." This interpretation is justified by a plain reading of the facts.

Feudalism, Monasticism, and Scholasticism, those three great social, religious, and intellectual institutions of the Middle Ages, permeated by, and to a great extent conditioning, the spirit of mediæval ecclesiasticism, were giving way, but in so doing, yielded up their contribution to the age that was to be.

Feudalism, the roughly organized effort to defend Europe from destructive attacks from without, and from disintegrating anarchy within, arose at a time when the imperial and papal forces were not yet solidified and before the national forces were formed. It was itself a transitional phase, socially and politically, through which Europe was to pass from barbarian leaders to national monarchs, and it should be studied from that point of view.

Monasticism was the assertion of the truth of individual responsibility. It outlived its usefulness because of the fearful perversions of which it had been guilty, but it did not decline till the truth which it had conserved—the principle of individualism—had been acknowledged as the basis of the coming reform. Luther himself was the product of its highest truth.

Scholasticism had turned back the tide of skepticism and materialism in the Middle Ages and had been the great intellectual prop and stay of the Creed and of the Papacy, furnishing food and material for the growing intellect of the West. But in the change from Realism to Nominalism, by Occam and his successors in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we note the beginning of the tendency to emancipate the reason from the yoke of authority and to disperse a multitude of false conceptions which embarrassed the mind in the search after truth. It made its first attempt to save philosophy and religion by proclaiming an absolute divorce between religion and speculative thought. The later scholasticism then settled down to the skeptical conclusion that what was false in philosophy might yet be true in theology.

Thus "at a time when the Church most needed every support which could contribute to sustain its decaying strength, it was deserted by the reason." "Reason", continues Dr. Allen, "which had been treated with distrust and suspicion, which the Church had sought to humiliate as its vassal, was taking its revenge. Yet no institutions which have played a large part in human history have lived in vain. Before they decline or disappear they yield up to the larger life of humanity the secret of their success or influence. As history evolves its contents, and its seemingly unconscious purpose is disclosed, that which had appeared most untrue or antagonistic to the spirit of Christ's religion is seen to have subserved the progress of mankind."

Among other forms of the new life which grew up under the inspiration and protection of the Church were the Gilds, of whose organization Dr. Gross has shown that "No theory can be satisfactory which wholly ignores the influence of the Christian Church. Imbued with the idea of the brotherhood of man, the Church naturally fostered the early growth of Gilds." Closely connected with this subject is that of the origin and development of cities, and the various leagues which they formed for mutual protection and progress. The Lombard League of Italian cities, was openly protected by the Papacy, though rather as a means of diminishing the imperial power in Italy than because the Papacy favored municipal freedom and self-government.

There was much in this same period which reacted against the embarrassing restraint of the Church, and directly prepared for the coming revolution and the modern world. We have already mentioned the individualistic spirit of the nominalistic phase of Scholasticism; the same spirit showed itself in national life and literature, and in many similar attempts. England, after the Norman Conquest, was on the way to realize itself as a nation, with a language of its own crystallized by Langland, Wiclif and Chaucer. France, after the accession of Hugh Capet to what was then only a feudal headship, advanced steadily and surely toward a united national consciousness under a strong centralized monarchy. Even as early as the struggle with Boniface VIII, the summoning of the States General by Philip IV, in

1302, revealed the united spirit of the people and strengthened the cause of king and nation. Spain showed a similar progress, although somewhat delayed and not realized until the end of the period. Italy gave all the signs of national life, in spirit, in language, and in activity in art, literature and industry, but a complete national consciousness realized in national organization was lacking, being thwarted by the positive efforts of pope and emperor, as well as by the obstacles occasioned by the great variety of peoples in the peninsula. In Germany, also, the feudal system gained too strong a hold, and the energy of its kings, which might have been used in organizing and building up national unity, was expended in a futile chase after the imperial crown beyond the Alps.

Furthermore, a national Church consciousness was coming slowly into existence, but its presence in this period has been very much exaggerated, especially in England, owing to ecclesiastical prejudice and a misunderstanding of the true historical place and significance of the Papacy. There was little if any organized ecclesiastical opposition, even to individual popes, that is, by the leaders of the Church, in any nation. In the whole history of the English Church, from its foundation by the mission of Pope Gregory I down to the Reformation, there cannot be found half-a-dozen instances of episcopal opposition to papal claims and commands; and, although the ecclesiastical opposition in France and in Germany was more outspoken, the ecclesiastical unity of Western Christendom under the headship of the Papacy was too strong and too well organized to permit it to be weakened by such attacks. All opposition which was at all threatening to the peace and integrity of the Church came from the secular rulers, supported, in many cases, by their national parliaments. In the matter of ecclesiastical opposition to the pope, especially in England, the instance of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, in the thirteenth century, is often cited, but a closer study of the case arouses strong suspicion of the account as given in Matthew of Paris; at any rate, Grosseteste's own admittedly genuine utterances are enough to decide the matter. To the king he writes: "The Pope is our spiritual father and mother, to whom we are incomparably more bound than to our

parents in the flesh, to honor and to obey, to revere and to help him in every way. Were we to fail to help him now, we should be breaking God's commandment, and our days will not be long in the land, we shall not be blessed in our children nor will our prayers be heard, we shall be heaping curses on our own heads; of all which things Holy Scripture gives manifest proof." (Letter CIX). This is pretty strong language for one who has been called the foremost opponent of the pope in England. Again he writes: "We often have to do from obedience, what we do with sorrow and would gladly leave undone if it might be so, for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." Never did the essential theory of papal omnipotence shine out more clearly than in his famous sermon at the Council of Lyons, 1245 A. D. Mr. A. L. Smith, in the Ford Lectures, *Church and State in the Thirteenth Century*, delivered at Oxford in 1905, draws this striking and instructive conclusion: "It was the intense conviction of the best minds of the age that on the connection with Rome depended the security of the national Church as against the secular power, the internal discipline and purity of that Church, and the whole prospect of further reform."

National Church consciousness, therefore, did not place itself in opposition to the Papacy, but there were signs of it in the growth of the general national consciousness of which we have already spoken.

Accordingly, there should be no doubt in the mind of any careful student of history, not only that Europe showed continued and unbroken recognition of papal supremacy during the whole mediæval period, but also that the manifestations of new life and interests, and even of individual reformers and pre-Reformation movements, which anticipated, and prepared for, many of the factors and elements of the Reformation itself, had their origin in the Papal Church, began, indeed, under its influence, and did not succeed in making any permanent organized break with the Papacy until the Reformation. Furthermore, this being so, it is evident that the Papacy is the one permanent central fact of the Middle Ages, the influence of which is seen in its power to combine and hold together the varied phases and movements of the period, giving meaning and unity to the whole.

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